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By making dating violence education a standard part of the health curriculum in middle schools and high schools, HB 6494 will:

1. Provide school districts with a continuum of instruction for students in grade 6 through 12;
2. Train classroom teachers, thereby strengthening a school's institutional response to an issue that plays itself out in classes, the cafeteria, the gym, and in hallways;
3. Create an opportunity for teachers to "cross-teach," which is when health, English, drama, civics teachers, and others use their subject areas simultaneously to talk to students about an issue;
4. Provide students with access seven hours a day, five days a week to school staff who have been trained to offer advice, guidance and resources to teens in violent dating relationships; and
5. Provide students with the knowledge to avoid violent dating relationships, help others do the same, and, we believe, lead to a decrease in abusive relationships.

An important by-product of HB 6494 is that it brings together existing resources in the community; namely, school districts and agencies of Connecticut's domestic violence coalition, especially where training and referral to services and resources are concerned.

Although these partnerships are already in place in some school districts - Norwalk, Stamford and Greenwich come to mind - they are not in place in many others. Therefore, to make sure the partnerships are established, we recommend that HB 6494 be revised to reflect their importance to this issue.

This is how we envision the training.

Experts in the field of dating violence consistently point to three curricula for use with students; two are free and one costs \$250. A school district, in consultation with local dating violence experts, will select a curriculum for its students, with the training of health teachers done by a domestic violence community educator and a current or retired classroom teacher.